

585 *Black-clad Saru-*
katsani crowded below the nuptial car, the bride
was hoisted to earth, and in a hubbub of shouts
and greetings and a rattle of musketry, the whole
mob headed for the little white church. The train,
letting off an answering whistle and an obligato
of steam, swayed away down the valley.

585 Inside the church two rows of columns sustained
346 the white barrel vault of the basilica. A gilt icon-
ostasis blazed, and overhead hung a great can-
delabrum formed by double-headed brass Byzan-
tine eagles joining their wing tips in a ring, and
from the center an ostrich egg was suspended.

[223] The noise and the heat in the church were consid-
erable, and thonged wooden flasks full of warm
red wine circulated freely among the congregation.

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585 The chanting of the priest — a fine figure in a
[293] white dalmatic and a wide blue and silver stole,
[292] with hair which uncoiled to his waist — soared
[202] heroically and effortlessly above this hubbub. All
[142] the faces were scorched, many were aquiline with
blue eyes, and the hair of several nomads was
bleached by the sun to a flaxen fairness. Apart
from the priest, the only other grave faces were
those of the bridal couple. The bride's with-
drawn expression, her downcast eyes under her
585 flowered headdress and a small blue cross which
292 was strangely penciled or painted on her brow,
[202] never changed. The groom was dressed in a gold-
embroidered red velvet waistcoat, a silk sash with
the blue and white Greek colors, white jutting

[p. 76-A]

3: Kabbadias

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[Although the Sarakatsani employ village priests, apparently of Greek origin, in various religious rituals, "by their own confession, no Sarakatsani was ever ordained a priest "(p.399). Therefore references to the use of priests in the text have been left under the functional religious categories (e.g., 796, 788, 585, 782, etc.) with the further addition of Category 177 (acculturation and culture contact) to indicate the use of the non-Sarakatsani priest.]

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754 himself. These methods can take effect either by contact with the victim or by proximity or even at a distance. One of our informants assured us that his grandmother had been stricken with blindness for seven years by having passed over bewitched objects.

(821) Sometimes the spells are cast by releasing the forces of nature. The enemies of a family that was celebrating the wedding of one of its members drew lightning on the company and caused the death of several persons.

The nature of the evil provoked by the spell, its duration and the recovery from it depend on the procedure used, on the power of the sorcerer and the means of defense available to the victims. Mysterious and incurable illnesses, sudden deaths, infirmities, material damage, economic catastrophes, family troubles, etc., are among the effects of black magic.

(791) There are several ways of coping with this. First, one can ask the aid of a richtologos. Then one can turn to the help of the Church in the person of the country priest, who will initiate a special exorcism against the spells. (86)

86. Neutralization of the evil by the opposition of favorable of unfavorable forces.

(751) Finally, one can use a protective amulet composed of various appropriate objects, the most efficacious of which is the viper's head.

(789) The magic function of the snake, the last but not least important (825) and the most secret, to which we have alluded on several occasions, completes the list. The snake, a lunar and chthonian symbol, connected with rain, fecundity and fertility, knowing the mysteries of life and death, is also a prophet and a sage. (87)

87. Van de Leeuw: Ibid., p. 67.--On the capacities of the snake as sage see: A.W. Perssons: The religion of Greece /cited in English/ who reports the ancient legend about the death and resurrection of Glaukos, son of Minos, brought about by the oracle of Polyidos who gave him a plant with which a

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771 drama would be legitimate, especially when one takes into account the
776 form of the rite and the season of the year during which it is celebrated.
178 But the lament for the Holy Virgin points to the explanation we have
proposed, in view of the fact that no similar practice exists in ancient
religions and that, consequently, this could not be considered a survival
from them. These customs therefore arise from the religious sentimentality
of the people and their origin is lost in the shadow of the Hellenic
Middle Ages. Furthermore, if the Sarakatsani mourn the Lord among them-
selves it is, according to their own explanation (which the same author
has reported to us), (4)

4. Ibid., p. 258

because their isolation does not permit them to go to church and participate
in the mourning of Christendom. We shall soon see that their society does
not even hesitate, in the absence of priests, to take upon themselves the
administration of the sacraments, a much more serious act from the
religious point of view. Then why would they not sing a few hymns, an
act that offends no dogma and would not be considered sacrilegious?

796 There is another custom connected with Good Friday. A woman from
789 each Tséligato must go to church to fetch flowers laid on the "tomb" of the
596 Lord; these flowers are used, as we have said, to make fumigations for,
441 sick children or for victims of the evil eye. This act, more magical than
165 religious, indicates the nature of the tomb erected on that day in the
konakia, which is considered merely a simple /330/ imitation of the
official "tomb" venerated in the churches. If it were otherwise, the
women would be able to use the flowers that serve to decorate it /the
former/ instead of fetching flowers from the church.

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128 The systematic demands of our analysis require that we interrupt
796 here the calendrical sequence and go on to certain remarks relating to

771 /343 cont./

177 19. See Ibid., A. I., p. 250.

114 the first in connection with marriage, the second in connection with
585 burial, state the contrary, we were able to confirm that no conjugal
764 union is contracted on the mere /344/ decision of the Tseligas and
without a religious service, and that no burial takes place outside
cemeteries. The priest is furthermore called upon to perform his
771 ministrations at the time of the seasonal migrations, before departure,
177 so that "the way is opened" and also in connection with the building
of a new konakia. On these occasions he performs the service of "the
holy water," according to the Orthodox rite.

771 But the phenomenon which shows best of all the intensity of Sarakatsani
764 religiosity can be observed when someone dies without the aid of the last
775 sacraments. For fear that the deceased will face the Supreme Judge with-
788 out having fulfilled the last duty of a Christian, Sarakatsani society
prescribes that in a corner of the hut a glass of wine be placed which is
kept for three days, in order to permit the deceased's soul to come and
partake of communion! In this practice, religion and the omni-functionalism
of Sarakatsani society meet, as we have seen it do above and in connection
with the practice of lamentations for the Lord.

771 To all this is added a myth reported by C. Hoeg which shows the
773 pride of the Sarakatsani "in belonging to the true religion." "At the
186 time we first came into being," our herders relate, "God asked us
whether we preferred money, beauty or Christianity. We chose Christianity,
the Jews money and the Turks beauty."

771 Nevertheless, in our observation of Sarakatsani life other facts
177 seem to contradict these assertions. By their own confession, no
773 Sarakatsani was ever ordained a priest. This statement was repeated to us
177 by all the groups studied and was spoken with an air of pride and malice!
(538) Then again, their folklore is very rich in tales and anecdotes satirizing
(539) the clergy. By way of example we briefly reproduce the following:
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